



STATEMENT OF
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BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
INTELLIGENCE, INFORMATION SHARING, AND TERRORISM RISK
ASSESSMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Lofgren, and Members of the Sub-Committee:
I am Joshua D. Filler and I serve as the Director of the Office of State & Local Government Coordination (SLGC) at DHS. I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Department's intelligence and information sharing programs with state, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and for your ongoing support of the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to keep America secure.

As the Committee is well aware, the exchange of information between the Department and our state, tribal and local partners is crucial to the mission of homeland security. SLGC, in addition to its other authorities and responsibilities, currently serves as a national coordinator and clearing house in DHS for information sharing between the Department and state, local, territorial, and tribal governments as well as the first responder community. We operate under the basic premise of providing as much information as possible to those who need it. We accomplish this using several different methods of coordination and information dissemination. .

Our efforts consist of keeping our partners informed of and facilitating their participation in DHS policy and program development actions, such as implementation of the Real ID Act, the Security and Prosperity Partnership, the National Response Plan, and the National Preparedness Goal. We also issue press releases and other announcements covering the full range of homeland security events, including grant announcements such as FIRE ACT grants and Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Grants; the Secretary's public speeches and testimony, including his recent testimony before the House and Senate on the future of DHS; and fact sheets on major homeland security issues such as mass transit and maritime security, critical infrastructure protection, identification of fraudulent passport documents, and much more. All of this information is provided to ensure that our partners are kept constantly up to date on what DHS is doing and that they are made a part of the process.

Information Sharing Methods

DHS employs a number of methods to share this kind of information and to keep the information sharing channels open at all times. First and primarily, DHS maintains the Homeland Security Operations Center to be the "eyes and ears of the Nation" for homeland security. The HSOC is a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week operational watch. Within the HSOC is the State and Local Watch Desk which is the primary communication arm for sharing all of the information I just described with our state, local, territorial and tribal partners, and for certain intelligence and incident management information that I will describe in more detail later in my testimony. The State & Local Watch has access to multiple points of contact within each state and from around the nation including police chiefs, tribal leaders, fire chiefs, homeland security advisors, emergency managers, governors, mayors, and county officials.

Second, the Department, through SLGC, hosts bi-weekly conference calls with the state and territorial Homeland Security Advisors and other officials to ensure they have a consistent and formal means of communicating with the Department on general issues. The calls are split into three parts: the Northeast; the South and parts of the Mid-West; and the Mid-West and Western states. The calls are an open forum for the free exchange of information and an opportunity for collaboration between DHS and our partners and include a formal agenda, read-ahead materials and subject matter experts from across the Department and the government as a whole.

Third, DHS also hosts a monthly conference call with all of the state, tribal, local and first responder associations to provide them routine updates on what is happening at DHS and the federal government as a whole and for the opportunity to exchange ideas and best practices. Like the bi-weekly calls these association calls include a formal agenda, read ahead materials, etc. Recent calls have included information on the Port Security Exercise Training Program (PortStep) and updates on the Department's Second Stage Review process.

Finally, SLGC and other DHS officials from all of our components stay in constant contact with our partners through other less formal means. We regularly attend conferences and meetings around the country to brief our partners on what is happening at the federal level and to hear from and learn from our partners directly on what is happening in their jurisdictions. We also work with the Office of the Private Sector to make sure that there is a constant, mutual exchange of information with our private sector partners.

All of these methods and interactions that I have described help to ensure that DHS stays in touch with its key partners in securing the homeland.

Intelligence and Incident Management Information

DHS shares intelligence and incident information at both the classified and unclassified level. Working with our partners in the federal government, DHS works to ensure that our partners at the state, tribal and local level have useful information they can either act upon immediately, use for situational awareness, or for strategic planning and more. Much of this information is shared by the HSOC and our Office of Information Analysis through the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN), the State & Local Watch Desk, or through teleconferences or video teleconferences, secure faxes and secure email.

The Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection element of DHS participates in the Intelligence Community Information Sharing initiatives through the Community Interoperability and Information Sharing Office under the DNI. DNI policy is that all terrorist related intelligence is disseminated at the unclassified level through the use of "tearlines." The majority of this kind of information can and should be shared at the unclassified level. This ensures maximum distribution among the first responder and homeland security community around the nation. DHS has worked hard with the Intelligence Community to "write to release" classified information into unclassified

products as rapidly as possible, while ensuring the protection of intelligence and law enforcement sources and methods. This will continue to be a priority.

Since its inception, DHS has provided over 250 unclassified and classified homeland security threat advisories and bulletins, including joint DHS and FBI bulletins, to our state, tribal and local partners. These have included summaries of terrorist tactics used in overseas attacks, such as in Madrid, Baghdad, Riyadh and more; potential threats to jurisdictions or economic sectors in the homeland; potential terrorist indicators and assessments of the strategic intent and capability of Al Qaida and other terrorist groups to attack the United States.

The operational components of DHS also routinely share information with state, local and tribal officials. For example, in close coordination with DHS/IAIP, the Coast Guard disseminates intelligence information throughout all levels of government and, where appropriate, the private sector. They are able to provide actionable tactical intelligence to Coast Guard operational commanders and state and local partners through Maritime Intelligence Fusion Centers (MIFC). At the state and local level, the Coast Guard facilitates information sharing between government partners through Area Maritime Security Committees (AMSC). The Coast Guard has also created Field Intelligence Support Teams (FIST) to collect and report intelligence information and liaison with federal, state, local partners. Furthermore, Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) conducts investigations that produce actionable, human intelligence.

In addition, CBP Border Patrol Agents routinely work with and share information and intelligence with local, state, tribal and federal law enforcement agencies. One example is the Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBETS) along the Northern border. In many IBET locations there are local, state, federal and Canadian government representatives with whom we share information to increase operational effectiveness.

The United States Secret Service is also involved in task forces with state and local law enforcement partners. One such task force, the Electronic Crimes Task Force, is comprised of computer and electronic experts that perform forensic analysis and investigations into computer and electronic crimes.

Finally, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) maintains two tactical intelligence facilities that collect and disseminate real-time and operational information and intelligence, in both the maritime and land border environments. This information is shared with Intelligence Community and law enforcement agencies at the state, local and tribal level, in a variety of formats, and at multiple classification levels.

While DHS is committed to sharing information at the unclassified level, we know there are times that information should be shared at the classified level to ensure maximum specificity. DHS also provides such classified information to our partners on a routine basis.

In order to better share classified information, DHS grants federally-sponsored security clearances to appropriate state, local and tribal officials with an ongoing need for access. There are currently more than 250 state and local government officials with SECRET and TOP SECRET-level DHS clearances, and there are an additional 150 state and local officials with non-DHS sponsored clearances who have been permanently certified (perm-certed) to DHS to allow them to participate in the Department's classified briefings and receive classified products. Furthermore, the Department has funding for several thousand more SECRET-level clearances for state, local, territorial, tribal, and private sector homeland security officials who can demonstrate an ongoing need for access to classified information.

The Department has also deployed several classified SECRET communications systems. In 2003 and 2004, DHS deployed two secure Video Teleconference (VTC) units to each state. One unit has been placed in each state Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and a second has been placed in each Governor's Office, or an alternate location of the State's choosing. DHS now has the capability to host all 50 states at once at the classified SECRET level.

In addition to the VTCs, DHS has deployed secure telephones to each state and several local governments. A secure phone has been deployed to each state EOC as well as to each state Governor's Office or alternate location. DHS also now has a secure conference call capability that is capable of hosting 18 secure calls simultaneously at the SECRET-level. SLGC is also working with the Office of Security and the Office of the Chief Information Officer to deploy several hundred excess secure phones at little to no cost to cleared state and local government officials with a need for additional phones.

DHS is also deploying a classified, SECRET-level data network called HSIN-SECRET that Director Broderick will discuss in more detail. This system is being deployed to every state and to 18 additional state and local homeland security and law enforcement sites. HSIN-SECRET will be available through a dedicated laptop computer and by those officials with a clearance on file with DHS and a HSIN-SECRET user account. Upon its completion, HSIN-SECRET will allow the Department to rapidly disseminate classified threat data and other information to state and local officials.

While a summary of modes of communication is important, let me provide the Sub-Committee with a few important examples of how some of these modes work and the type of classified and unclassified information that is shared. Recently, DHS hosted a national threat update via SECRET VTC with all 50 states, the FBI and the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC). The briefing consisted of an update on a variety of threat streams and lessons learned from tactics used in Iraq and other overseas locations. The briefing was followed-up with a written classified summary distributed to all 50 states.

An even more recent example involves the London bombings. On the morning of July 7, 2005, upon learning of the attacks, the Department immediately began reaching out to our federal, state, tribal and local partners. This included the Secretary contacting key

Governors and Mayors to discuss the London attacks and the need to provide immediate additional security in major mass transit systems.

After further consulting with the Intelligence Community later that morning, the Department, through SLGC, hosted two national unclassified conference calls with all 56 states and territories and major cities and counties from around the country, along with the FBI. On the first call, the Secretary outlined what had happened in London and discussed the possibility of raising the alert level in the United States. Shortly thereafter, the Deputy Secretary hosted a similar national call and announced the alert level would be raised to Code Orange nationally for the mass transit sector only. I then personally hosted a call with all the first responder and state, tribal and local associations to announce the raising of the alert level. Later that afternoon, DHS and the FBI released a joint unclassified bulletin to our partners outlining the intelligence picture we had and the basis for raising the alert level for mass transit in the United States along with specific protective measures for the mass transit sector. Towards the end of the day, another national call hosted by DHS with the Coast Guard and the U.S. Department of Transportation was held to announce the raising of the maritime security level to MARSEC 2 for passenger ferries carrying 150 passengers or more.

Tribes

As mentioned before, the sharing of information does not extend only to the states and local governments; tribal governments are also an important information sharing partner. To build relationships and share information about the Department with tribal officials, DHS personnel regularly participate in tribal association meetings, conferences, and other events including the National Native American Law Enforcement Association annual conference, the National Congress of American Indians annual conference and the United South and East American Indian annual conference. The Department also worked directly with the leadership of the Mohegan and Mashantucket-Pequot Tribes from Connecticut in 2005 during the Top Officials (TOPOFF) 3 exercise.

At this time, the majority of the unclassified threat information communicated by DHS to the tribes is distributed via email to appropriate officials as well as posted on HSIN. The Department's ability to communicate information to the tribes is limited by a lack of email connections among tribal leaders; however, we have been working to bring tribal nations into HSIN. Several tribal nations in California and Arizona are currently using HSIN.

Fusion Centers

As the Sub-Committee is aware, many states and large urban areas have established intelligence fusion centers to better collect, analyze, and disseminate homeland security information. Several federal agencies, including DHS components and the FBI have representatives working in these fusion centers. The Department's Homeland Security Advisory Council Intelligence and Information Sharing Working Group and the Department of Justice's Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative have worked

closely to establish baseline standards for fusion center to operate under. The Department will continue to work with all of our partners, including the DNI, DOJ, and state, local, and tribal officials, to further enhance these standards and integrate these fusion centers around the nation.

Conclusion

Information sharing with our state, territorial, tribal, and local partners is one of the key priorities of the Department of Homeland Security. Since September 11, 2001 we have made tremendous progress in this area. However, we still have much more work to do. We at DHS will continue to make adjustments, we will continue to enhance our methods, and we will continue to work closely with all of our partners to better secure the homeland.

Once again, I thank the Sub-Committee for providing me this opportunity today as well as for their continued support and valuable input. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

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